

REMARKS

In response to the Final Office Action mailed April 2, 2007, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration. Claims 1-13 and 15 were previously pending in this application. Claims 1 and 9 are amended herein and claim 15 is canceled. To further the prosecution of this application, each of the rejections set forth in the Office Action has been carefully considered and is addressed below. The application as presented is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Initially, Applicants thanks Examiner Hageman for the courtesies extended during the May 22, 2007 telephone interview with Applicants' representative Scott J. Gerwin (Reg. No. 57,866). The substance of the interview is summarized herein.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-12 and 15 under 35 U.S.C §102(e) as purportedly being unpatentable over Morikawa (6,946,612). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

In Applicants' response of January 3, 2007, Applicants noted that the Office Action of October 2, 2006 asserted that the sorting stacking units 210 and 230 of Morikawa are initial sorting regions. Applicants' response pointed out that Morikawa does not disclose sorting the items in each of the initial sorting regions into an intermediary sorted set, because, in the system of Morikawa, the trays in any given sorting stacking unit are never sorted into a set that includes trays from a different sorting stacking unit.

During the telephone interview, the Examiner agreed that, in the system of Morikawa, the trays from different sorting stacking units are never intermixed, but questioned whether the limitation of claim 1 that recited, "sorting the items in each of the at least two initial sorting regions into an intermediary sorted set by moving at least some of the items in at least one of the initial sorting regions between the at least one initial sorting region and at least two of the additional sorting regions," required intermixing of items from different initial sorting regions. Applicants' representative explained that the original intent of this limitation was to require that items from different initial sorting regions are sorted into the same intermediary sorted set.

To make this even more explicit, Applicants have amended this limitation of claim 1 to now recite, "sorting the items in each of the at least two initial sorting regions into at least one intermediary sorted set by moving at least some of the items in at least one of the initial sorting regions between the at least one initial sorting region and at least two of the additional sorting

regions, **such that two items from different initial sorting regions are sorted into the same intermediary sorted set.**”

Morikawa fails to disclose or suggest this limitation as, in the system of Morikawa, two trays from different sorting stacking units never end up in the same set. Thus, claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Morikawa. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn.

Claims 2-8 depend from claim 1 and are patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of these claims be withdrawn.

Claim 9, as amended, recites, *inter alia*, “a first mechanism for physically moving at least one postal bin between at least two selected sorting regions, **where the first mechanism is configured to move two items initially located in different initial regions into the same additional region.**”

As should be clear from the discussion above, Morikawa fails to disclose or suggest this limitation of claim 9, as the system of Morikawa does not have a mechanism to move two items in different sorting stacking units into the same additional sorting region. Thus, claim 9 patentably distinguishes over Morikawa. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claim 9 be withdrawn.

Claims 10-12 depend from claim 9 and are patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of these claims be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at the telephone number listed below if this communication does not place the case in condition for allowance.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 23/2825.

Respectfully submitted,
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By:



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